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NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER

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imagery analysis report

SSBN Launch Preparations, Huludao Naval Base Shipyard and Port Facility, China (S)

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Z-20194/80
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DECEMBER 1980
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SSBN LAUNCH PREPARATIONS
HULUDAO NAVAL BASE SHIPYARD AND PORT FACILITY, CHINA (S)

1. (S/D) Detailed analysis of imagery reveals that launch preparations for China's first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) are underway at Huludao Naval Base Shipyard and Port Facility and that a late December 1980 launch is a possibility. China's two Han-class nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) were launched from this shipyard in late December 1970 and 1977. 25X1 25X1

2. (S/D) An 83-meter-long keel block pattern, used to support the second Han during its outfitting, has remained in the launch dock since that submarine departed The keel blocks were observed in the launch dock apparently still intact (Figure 2). that the keel blocks were being rearranged and extended. However, a shadow falling inside the launch dock made it difficult to locate the west end point of the new keel block pattern. the keel block pattern had been rearranged and that it was approximately 101 meters long, 18 meters longer than the pattern used with the Han (Figure 3). The keel block pattern associated with the Soviet Yankee-class SSBN is 108 to 110 meters in length. 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

3. (S/D) Another indication of launch preparations was the installation of transfer trucks underneath the launch carriage assembly, a step necessary to move a submarine from the construction hall to the launch dock. The launch carriage assembly was lengthened in 1978 to 108 meters, 18 meters longer than that used to launch the two Han-class submarines. the launch carriage had been moved a short distance northward on the transverser and aligned in front of bay 2 of the construction hall. This was the first observed movement of the launch carriage since shortly after it was lengthened in 1978. 25X1 25X1

4. (S/D) The new keel block pattern in the launch dock indicates that the SSBN will be launched into the dock for outfitting. A new outfitting area is being prepared on the south edge of the transverser (Figure 4). This activity, together with the recent identification of a new, large submarine sail component near the transverser (Figure 4), suggests that the new area will be used to outfit yet another SSN/SSBN that is probably under construction inside the construction hall.

RELATED DOCUMENT

NPIC, Z-20038/80, IAR-0141/80, *Recent SLBM Developments in China (S)*, Jul 80 (SECRET/ 25X1 25X1

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FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF HULUDAO NAVAL BASE SHIPYARD AND PORT FACILITY, CHINA

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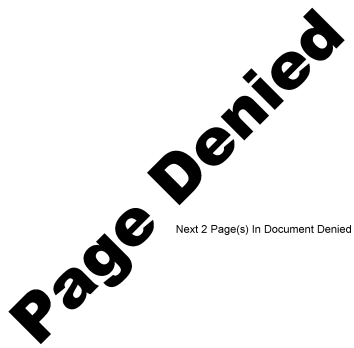

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